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CORINNE OF THE CIRCUS

By

KATHERINE KAVANAUGH



No. 636

ART. WORKERS LEAGUE

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By MAURICE HAGEMAN

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THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

CORINNE OF THE CIRCUS

A COMEDY-DRAMA IN THREE ACTS

By

KATHARINE KAVANAUGH

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CAST

CORINNE, a girl of eighteen, very sweet and dainty in her manner.
Should be played by a slightly built girl, dressed in the tarleton skirts of a Circus rider.

JOSEPH AMBROSIA JONES, a good-looking man not over thirty-five years, dresses to represent the typical countryman, but not exaggerated.

DRUCILLA JONES, a woman of forty, good-hearted, but fussy and talkative. Wears a costume a little behind the times in the first act. Bright colored house dresses in the second and third.

HARVEY, the manager of the Circus. A man of middle age, wears plain business suit, but suggests the showman.

DAVIS, the ringmaster. A man of thirty-five. Rather good-looking. Wears in first act the ringmaster's costume of white breeches, riding boots, red coat and high hat. In second and third acts plain business suit.

TED, the jockey. A boy of fourteen. Wears in first act a jockey's costume. In second and third acts plain suit.

DR. THORNE, a good-looking young man of twenty-five years.
(A number of extra people for Circus.)

Tent can be made by throwing a large strip of canvas over a brace made of three poles, the corners of the canvas having cords to pass through screw rings screwed into the stage floor at the right distance. The smaller tents are only partly on stage and can be easily constructed.

ACT I. The county fair grounds at New Freedom. The circus.

ACT II. The home of Joseph Ambrosia Jones. Five weeks later.

ACT III. The same. The next morning.

PLAYS TWO HOURS.

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DEC 26 1916

no 1.

CORINNE OF THE CIRCUS

ACT I.

SCENE—*The county fair grounds, New Freedom. A large tent C., with banner announcing in big letters:*

DARNEM & SELSUM'S CIRCUS.

A smaller tent R., only partly showing on stage, with banner announcing: BABE LA VERE, THE FAT LADY. Another small tent L., partly on stage, with banner announcing: SKINIBO, THE LIVING SKELETON. In front of center tent have four or five boxes or bench for performers to stand on when exhibited by the manager. The curtain rises showing a number of villagers and townspeople wandering about the fair grounds, some in couples. They pause before the tents and read the signs, buy peanuts from the peanut boy, and lemonade from the lemonade boy. The band is playing in discords off the stage. A small boy with a basket of peanut bags goes among the crowd, calling "Yer's yer hot roasted peanuts. Buy some peanuts fer yer lady friend. Only a nickel. Hot roasted peanuts." Another boy carries a pail and dipper and calls out: "Yer's yer raspberry lemonade, cent a glass." An old Jewish balloon peddler is pushed about by the crowd. He calls with a strong Jewish accent: "Bal-oons, bal-oons. Tek de baby a bal-oons."

After the curtain is up a minute or two, the band stops playing. HARVEY, the manager steps from the center tent to one of the boxes and begins to call the crowd.

HARVEY. Over here! Over here! See the big show! The greatest aggregation of talent in the world! The most wonderful show on earth! Come in! Come in! Don't fail to see the sights of a lifetime! [*Jos. and DRUCILLA wander on from R. 1 E. and join the crowd listening to HARVEY.*] Ladies and gentlemen, I am going to present to you, free of charge, a few of our world-famous artists. The greatest of all is Corinne, the most daring bareback rider in the universe. Worth alone the price of admission. Corinne has ridden before the crowned heads of Europe. My friends, I am going to present to you this wonderful girl. She is not much more than a child, but she rides with the courage of a hundred men. Corinne! [*There is a flare of trumpets from within and CORINNE steps from the center tent to one of the boxes, and smiles at the crowd.* Now, friends, you may have seen some circus riding that you have considered wonderful, but until you have witnessed Corinne's performance you will never know what really great riding is. [*JOE looks at CORINNE as if fascinated. She notices him and smiles. DRUCILLA nudges him.*] I will next present to you Marcelline, the world-famous clown. He has made millions laugh! He will make *you* laugh! Marcelline! [*With another flare of trumpets MARCELLINE steps from the tent to a box next to CORINNE. He is made up as a clown; he bows and tips his cap to the crowd.*] Marcelline is known the world over as the Prince of Clowns. During his performance he wears a diamond and ruby medallion presented to him by the late King Edward. See Marcelline! He has made the whole world laugh!

DRUCILLA. [*To JOE.*] I don't keer so much for him, do you, Joe?

JOS. I reckon he's right comical when he gits to cuttin' up.

HARVEY. I will next present to you Salambo, the strong man. [*A flare of trumpets and SALAMBO steps from the tent to a box next to MARCELLINE. He wears*

pink cotton tights and a tiger's skin; folds his arms and frowns at the crowd.]

DRUCILLA. My, he looks vicious.

HARVEY. Salambo lifts five thousand pounds at each performance. You can't afford to miss it. His feats of strength are marvelous. Next let me present Princess Zulika, the Snake Charmer. [*A flare of trumpets and ZULIKA steps from tent to box. She is dressed in oriental style with many bracelets and ornaments. A stuffed snake is wound around her shoulders.*]

DRUCILLA. Mercy, look at the snake.

HARVEY. You will notice the monster reptile wound around the Princess. He is only one of many that she handles fearlessly. She has charmed him—that's why he is so motionless. It now gives me great pleasure to bring before you Allabooboo, the wonderful Egyptian Sword-Swallower and Fire-Eater. Ladies and gentlemen, he actually eats fire. [*ALLABOOBOO appears—dressed as an Egyptian.*]

DRUCILLA. Well, I think that's foolish.

HARVEY. Now, my friends, these are only a few of the strong attractions to be seen within. See the Two-headed Baby; see Bucko, the Trick Donkey; see the Fat Lady and the Living Skeleton. Don't take my word for it! Come in and see for yourself! The performance is about to begin. [*The performers enter tent.*] Twenty-five cents—only a quarter—see the whole show—see everything! Come one! Come all!

[*The crowd begins buying tickets and entering tent. JOS. and DRUCILLA turn down stage.*]

JOS. Do you want to go in, Drucilla?

DRUCILLA. I dunno, Joe; think we oughta?

JOS. Well, we came here to see the sights.

DRUCILLA. That's so. I ain't seen a circus since I was a child. But suppose some of our townspeople were here.

JOS. Well, what about it?

DRUCILLA. Nuthin'. Only you know how they are. I kin just hear 'Tildy Brown saying: "Who d'ye think

I saw up at New Freedom? Joseph Ambrosia Jones and that old maid sister of his a-goin' to the circus. Ain't it scandalous?"

JOS. Well, who keers for 'Tildy Brown? If I want to go to the circus I'm a-goin'. I don't guess there's anybody from down our way up here anyhow, so we might as well go in and enjoy ourselves.

DRUCILLA. Well, maybe.

JOS. Say, Druce, did you notice that little girl that came out first—stood on the end over there? [*Indicates where CORINNE stood.*]

DRUCILLA. With them awful short tarletan skirts on? I should say I did. Well, what about her?

JOS. Warn't she pretty when she smiled?

DRUCILLA. Well, Joseph Ambrosia Jones! You ain't makin' up to a circus girl, I hope.

JOS. What d'ye mean, "makin' up"? I only said she was pretty, and she looks young and innocent too.

DRUCILLA. Young and innocent! A circus girl! Well, Joseph Ambrosia!

JOS. Well, why not? A girl is what she is, circus or no circus. That girl is everything she ought to be.

DRUCILLA. Not in *them* skirts!

JOS. What's that got to do with it? Skirts don't make the girl. You women are the contarndest creatures. Just because the child is pretty.

DRUCILLA. Child! She may be eighty for all you know. They say them paints and powders is wonderful.

JOS. She ain't a day over eighteen.

DRUCILLA. Seems to me you discovered a whole lot in them few minutes. Well, go in and see her if you like, but I never thought I'd see the day when *my* brother would look at a circus rider.

JOS. [*Puts his hand in his pocket.*] Come along, then. I don't want to miss her performance.

DRUCILLA. Oh, they run 'em every hour, I guess. Now, I'd rather see that Salambo fellow that lifts five thousand pounds.

JOS. Well, I never thought I'd see the day my sister would look at a man in tights.

DRUCILLA. Joe Jones, now, you behave.

JOS. [*Taking her arm.*] Come along, Druce; everybody's gone in but us.

DRUCILLA. I'm coming, Joe; but I can't get over them skirts!

JOS. [*To HARVEY.*] How much to go in?

HARVEY. Only a quarter—twenty-five cents.

JOS. [*Digging in his pockets.*] Well, I guess I know how many cents a quarter is. Kin my sister go in on half-fare—she ain't of age yit?

DRUCILLA. [*Digs JOE in the ribs with her umbrella.*] Now, Joseph Ambrosia, you behave.

HARVEY. Well, she does look young, but I reckon you'll have to pay full fare. [*Takes money from JOS.*]

DRUCILLA. [*Going into tent.*] Oh, you go long. Ain't you men awful! [*JOS. and DRUCILLA enter tent.*]

[*Enter DAVIS, the Ring Master, L. U. He is dressed in the white riding breeches and red coat and high hat of the circus ring master. He crosses quickly to HARVEY.*]

DAVIS. Has Corinne finished her performance?

HARVEY. No, she's on now. [*Hand clapping within tent.*] Hear the applause? She always gets 'em!

DAVIS. Well, she has got to help me out this afternoon, and do a second turn in my tent.

HARVEY. What's the idea?

DAVIS. Little O'Brien was just thrown and can't go on again. He'll be all right by tonight.

HARVEY. Spitfire threw him?

DAVIS. Yes; he's new to circus work, you know, and gets frightened easily.

HARVEY. And you want Corinne to ride him when he's in that condition?

DAVIS. Oh, he's over his scare now. Besides, Corinne will stick to him.

HARVEY. Yes, the kid will stick all right. Every horse in the show loves her, but Spitfire is new to the business and I don't like the idea of giving him to

Corinne. Suppose he threw her. We'd lose one of the best performers we ever had.

DAVIS. He won't throw her, I tell you. Even if he did, she'd only be laid up for a week or so—

HARVEY. Oh, is that all! Davis, you know as well as I do that this show is hardly able to carry its working crew, much less invalids. If Corinne, or any other performer, is incapacitated for work they are excess baggage and the show can't afford to carry 'em. *You* know that as well as I do.

DAVIS. If anything happened to Corinne, *I'd* take care of her.

HARVEY. Oh, you would, eh? Do you think *she'd* like that.

DAVIS. She couldn't help herself if she was down and out. I'm the only real friend she's got.

HARVEY. Friend! You're a peach of a friend for a young girl, ain't you? Everybody, is on to you, Davis. You've been pestering Corinne ever since she joined the show. Why don't you quit and let the girl alone?

DAVIS. Mind your own business, Harvey. I can attend to mine.

HARVEY. I am minding my own business. You seem to forget that I am managing this show and the owners hold me responsible. Now, if you don't attend to your work and let that girl alone, I'll fire you.

DAVIS. And leave yourself without a ring-master, eh? That's likely, ain't it?

HARVEY. It will be a blamed sight easier to find a ring-master as good as you are than to find a performer like Corinne. Now, think that over, Davis, think it over!

DAVIS. Oh, dry up! I've got to have Corinne to fill O'Brien's place this afternoon, and that is all there is to it. Do I get her?

HARVEY. Not to ride Spitfire!

DAVIS. Well, I'll give her Queenie. How's that?

HARVEY. Queenie is all right.

DAVIS. Yes, tame as a kitten, but she'll spoil the performance. Audiences like a dangerous horse.

HARVEY. But they wouldn't like to ride one. You can have Corinne if she rides Queenie, but not for Spitfire.

DAVIS. All right—it's a go, then. [*Loud applause from within tent.*]

HARVEY. She is just through her turn. I'll tell her. [*Exits into tent.*]

DAVIS. [*Angrily.*] Blast his impudence! What's Corinne to him? She will ride Spitfire. I'll see to that.

[*Enter TEDDY, the Jockey, quickly from L. U. He is a boy of sixteen or eighteen, dressed as a jockey.*]

TEDDY. Say, Mr. Davis, they just sent O'Brien to the hospital.

DAVIS. To the hospital! Who did it?

TEDDY. The doctor.

DAVIS. Doctor! Who had the nerve to send for a doctor without my orders?

TEDDY. Nobody sent for him. There was a young doctor in the audience and he came back when he saw O'Brien fall. He said his arm is broke.

DAVIS. The blamed meddler. What did he want to butt in for?

TEDDY. Well, der was nobody there to stop him, and he just took charge. He says to O'Brien: "De hospital for youse," and rings for de wagon.

DAVIS. Well, O'Brien will stay in the hospital then. Let that fresh doctor take care of him. We pull stakes and leave tonight.

TEDDY. Gee, boss, I'm glad it ain't me.

DAVIS. Not a word of this to Corinne, do you understand?

TEDDY. Corinne? Gee, Mr. Davis, you ain't goin' to let Corinne ride Spitfire today?

DAVIS. Shut up! Spitfire is over his tantrums by this time.

TEDDY. Not so as you kin notice it, he ain't. He's stamping and pawing the air like sin. I wouldn't want to tackle him.

DAVIS. Nobody is asking you to. All you've got to do is keep your mouth shut; do you get me?

TEDDY. I'm wise. 'Tain't my funeral! [*Exits R. 2 E.*]

[*Enter CORINNE from center tent; she wears a cloak reaching to her knees and covering her skirts.*]

DAVIS. [*Turns toward her impulsively, holding out his hand.*] Corinne!

CORINNE. [*Draws away from him.*] Don't touch me, Mr. Davis, please.

DAVIS. What makes you dislike me, Corinne?

CORINNE. I don't know. I just do, that's all.

DAVIS. You must have a reason for it?

CORINNE. I haven't any, except that I don't trust you.

DAVIS. That's childish, and you're not a child any longer, Corinne. You're a darned pretty young woman, do you know it?

CORINNE. I don't want to hear it from you, Mr. Davis.

DAVIS. Well, you're going to hear it from me, and hear it often. I'm crazy about you, Corinne, and if you think I'm going to lose you, you're mistaken.

CORINNE. You can't lose what you've never had. If you don't stop annoying me I'll complain to Mr. Harvey.

DAVIS. Harvey knows better than to interfere with me. Why, you foolish child, I'm the best friend you've got. There isn't a man connected with this show that would do as much for you as I would. Come, Corinne, be reasonable. [*Attempts to take her hand.*]

CORINNE. [*Draws away from him.*] Don't touch me, Mr. Davis. I hate you.

DAVIS. You do, eh? Well, maybe you'll be glad to take that back some day. Maybe you'll be glad of a friend before long.

CORINNE. I don't consider you a friend.

DAVIS. Why not?

CORINNE. I can't explain. I only know that something warns me against you. I don't trust you—I don't trust you!

DAVIS. As I just told you, that's silly! Now, listen to reason for a moment. Suppose you became ill, or something happened to you in the ring, what would become of you?

CORINNE. I don't know.

DAVIS. You are absolutely alone, aren't you?

CORINNE. [*Pensively.*] Yes.

DAVIS. Haven't got a soul to turn to?

CORINNE. [*Wistfully.*] The management would take care of me.

DAVIS. The management have got all they can do to carry the show. They haven't got either money or time to waste on a performer that can't work. You would be left behind—among strangers—to live or die as you saw fit.

CORINNE. Why do you say all this to me?

DAVIS. I want to teach you to appreciate a friend when you have one.

CORINNE. You?

DAVIS. Yes. I love you, Corinne. [*Draws closer to her.*]

CORINNE. I don't think you know what love is, Mr. Davis.

DAVIS. Maybe you can teach me, Corinne. [*Attempts to put his arm around her.*]

CORINNE. [*Strikes him angrily and steps back.*] Don't touch me, I told you.

DAVIS. [*His hand to his cheek.*] You little fiend, I'll tame you if it takes a lifetime.

[*Enter HARVEY from center tent. CORINNE is extreme R. of stage. DAVIS turns toward L. U. E.*]

HARVEY. My show is almost over, Davis; you had better get back to your ring.

DAVIS. I was just going.

HARVEY. Corinne, you'll have to work an extra turn today on account of O'Brien.

CORINNE. O'Brien! What has happened to him?

DAVIS. [*With a sign to HARVEY.*] Oh, he's just sick, that's all.

HARVEY. So you'll have to ride in his place. Queenie knows you and will work with you.

CORINNE. Oh, I don't mind riding Queenie. We like each other.

[*Crowd begins to come from tent.*]

HARVEY. Here's the crowd. Get to your ring, Davis. I'll ballyhoo the bunch over to you. [DAVIS *exits L. U.* E. HARVEY *stands L. U. and begins to call the crowd.*] Over here! Over here! An entire new show! Come along, friends; don't leave the grounds without seeing everything. [*Band plays a lively air; the crowd wanders off L. U.*]

[JOE and DRUCILLA *come from tent, following the crowd.* CORINNE *starts across stage toward L. U.*]

JOS. [*Nudges DRUCILLA.*] There she is, Druce; ain't she sweet? [*As CORINNE passes JOE, her cloak drops from her shoulders; JOE quickly picks it up and replaces it, smiling at CORINNE.*]

CORINNE. [*Smiles back at JOE over her shoulder.*] Thank you, sir. [*Exits L. U.*]

DRUCILLA. [*Watches the proceeding.*] Them skirts!

HARVEY. [*Continues his ballyhoo L. U. as the crowd wanders off.*] A new show! New acts! See Lorenzo Brothers, the world's greatest trapeze performers; they hang by their teeth. See the Melvene Sisters, Queens of the Wire.

JOS. Do you want to go in, Druce?

DRUCILLA. No, I ain't a-goin' to look at any more people without their proper clothes.

JOS. Yeh, that Salambo friend of yours *didn't* have much on.

DRUCILLA. Well, he had almost as much as that girl that rode the horses.

JOS. Gee whiz! but couldn't she ride!

DRUCILLA. Almost skeered me to death. I thought she was goin' to land on her head every minute.

JOS. And them hosses! Great Jumpin' Jupiter, Druce, wouldn't they look fine in my livery stable.

DRUCILLA. They'd make all *our* hosses look like skates.

HARVEY. Don't miss the Roman chariot race! The finest horses and most daring riders in the world. See Two-Step Billy, the horse that dances.

JOS. Did ye hear that, Druce? A horse that dances the two-step.

DRUCILLA. I don't believe a word he says.

JOS. Wait, I'll ask him if he's lyin'. [*To HARVEY.*] Say, Mister, does that horse really dance the two-step?

HARVEY. As gracefully as you could yourself.

JOS. Then, by Heck, he don't dance at all.

DRUCILLA. I knew he was fibbing.

HARVEY. Come in and see for yourself. The show is now on. Only fifteen cents.

DRUCILLA. Huh! He's come down some.

JOS. We've just come out of that other show.

HARVEY. This is an entirely different one, all new acts.

JOS. Is that little girl riding again?

HARVEY. Corinne? Yes, she's taking the place of a jockey that was thrown. [*Applause from L. U. E.*] I think Corinne is just entering the ring. She is a great favorite—gets all the applause.

JOS. Yeh! I clapped for her myself. Is she your daughter?

HARVEY. No, just a performer. Orphan, I believe.

JOS. [*To DRUCE.*] What d'ye think of that, Druce; she ain't got no parents.

DRUCILLA. Well, I can't help that.

JOS. Great snakes, who said you could; but ain't it sad? She's so young and sweet. [*To HARVEY.*] Ain't she got a sweetheart neither?

HARVEY. [*Smiles.*] Not that I know of.

DRUCILLA. That's sad too, I reckon.

JOS. No, that don't seem to worry me so much. [*To HARVEY.*] May be one of them other ladies is her sister, or aunt, eh?

HARVEY. No, she is entirely alone. Her parents were circus people, but they were killed by a fall from the trapeze years ago.

JOS. By gum, that's awful. Poor child!

HARVEY. You seem to have taken a fancy to her.

JOS. Yeh! I have! She's so sweet and pretty.

DRUCILLA. My land, Joe, can't you say nuthin' but sweet and pretty?

JOS. Yeh! Pretty and sweet!

[*A scream is heard off stage. Noise of voices growing louder and louder and more excited.*]

HARVEY. My, what's wrong! [*Exits quickly L. U.*]

JOS. [*Excited.*] Druce, Druce, somethin's happened; somethin's happened.

DRUCILLA. Thank the Lord we weren't in there.

JOS. But the little girl—Corinne—she's in there—it was her turn—may be it's her, Druce, may be it's her!

DRUCILLA. Well, don't get so excited, Joe; she ain't none of our folks.

[*The crowd come on excitedly, making way for HARVEY who carries CORINNE in his arms. He comes down C., kneels and rests CORINNE on the floor, her head in his arm.*]

HARVEY. Corinne, little girl, where are you hurt?

CORINNE. [*Weakly crying.*] My foot, sir. I'm afraid it's broken.

TEDDY. [*Stands R. C. Speaks to HARVEY.*] She might have been killed, sir! Spitfire turned at the wrong time. [*DAVIS comes down L. C.*]

HARVEY. Spitfire! You were riding Queenie.

CORINNE. No, sir, it was Spitfire. He made me do it. [*Points to DAVIS.*]

HARVEY. [*Looks sharply at DAVIS.*] Against my orders!

DAVIS. She was all right until she made the wrong jump!

TEDDY. No, sir, Mr. Harvey. It was Spitfire made the mistake. He turned back suddenly because Mr. Davis flicked the whip in his face. I saw it.

DAVIS. You lie, you little scamp!

CORINNE. It's true, sir. I saw it, too.

HARVEY. Davis, you're discharged!

DAVIS. All right. I expected it. You needn't bother about Corinne, either; I'll take care of her.

CORINNE. Oh, no, no, Mr. Harvey, don't leave me with him—I'm afraid of him—I hate him!

HARVEY. I wish I didn't have to leave you at all, girlie, but you'll be better in the hospital. [CORINNE begins to sob softly.]

JOS. [*Has watched the scene closely, now speaks to HARVEY.*] Say, mister, we live in the next township just below here—the hospital ain't no place for a lonely little girl. Will you give her to us? My sister and I will take good care of her. [DRUCILLA looks on in surprise, but does nothing to detract from the quietness of the scene.]

HARVEY. [*To JOE.*] Do you mean it? [*To CORINNE.*] Are you willing, girlie? They look like kind people.

CORINNE. [*Looks up at JOS., holds out her arms.*] Oh, yes, sir. I know you're good.

JOS. [*Smiles happily, takes her from HARVEY'S arms, she rests her head contentedly against his shoulder.*] Then come along, Honey; we're going home!

DRUCILLA. [*Explodes with surprise.*] Well, Joseph Ambrosia!

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE—*Sitting room in the home of JOSEPH AMBROSIA JONES. Five weeks later. A comfortably furnished room. Practical door about C. in flat. A broad low window, with muslin curtains, left of door. Back of the window a wood or road drop or backing. Practical door R. U. E. Plain table with cover down L. C. Couch R. C. Large chair R. of table. A few other pieces of furniture and pictures to dress stage. At rise DRUCILLA is seated at table with a sewing basket in her lap. Enter JOSEPH C. D. Hangs up his hat.*

DRUCILLA. That you, Joseph Ambrosia?

JOS. [*Coming down stage.*] Does it look like me?

DRUCILLA. Some.

JOS. Then it must be me.

DRUCILLA. But what are you doin' home so early in the afternoon?

JOS. [*Sits on couch.*] Oh, just felt like it, that's all.

DRUCILLA. Been feelin' like it pretty often lately, aint' you?

JOS. You got any objections?

DRUCILLA. No, glad to have you, but you ain't foolin' me none, brother.

JOS. What you tryin' to git at—ain't foolin' you none?

DRUCILLA. Oh, I wasn't born yesterday.

JOS. 'Deed you was not! You ain't no spring chicken, Druce.

DRUCILLA. Well, when it comes to that, I ain't much older than you be, and look at yourself!

JOS. Well, what's the matter with myself?

DRUCILLA. You been actin' like a lovesick idiot ever since that child has been in the house.

JOS. I ain't, neither.

DRUCILLA. You have so.

JOS. And she ain't no child—she's nineteen years old.

DRUCILLA. And you're thirty-two. Think she's goin' to fall in love with *you*?

JOS. No, I reckon not. She's too sweet and pretty for a—

DRUCILLA. There you go startin' that "sweet-and-pretty" thing again. Can't you think of nothin' else?

JOS. I can't think of nothin' but her, Druce—no use denyin' it. Even when I'm tryin' to sell a pesky mule I catch myself telling the customer she's sweet and pretty.

DRUCILLA. He must have thought you were crazy.

JOS. Reckon he did. Said he never heard of a mule being sweet and pretty.

DRUCILLA. Well, no wonder. [JOSEPH *starts toward R. U. E.*] Where you goin'?

JOS. Goin' upstairs to see the little girl.

DRUCILLA. You kin save your steps—she ain't there.

JOS. [*Turns down stage.*] Ain't there! What d'ye mean?

DRUCILLA. Doctor Thorne took her out for a drive.

JOS. [*Disappointed.*] Oh, he did, did he? Why, darn him, he told me she wasn't able to go out yet.

DRUCILLA. Well, he's changed his mind. She walked today without a crutch and he says she'll be all right.

JOS. If that's the case he can stop comin' here. Hang him, we engaged him as a doctor, not a nurse.

DRUCILLA. What are you mad about?

JOS. I ain't mad.

DRUCILLA. No, you're just boilin', that's all. Jealous, I reckon.

JOS. I ain't jealous—but I do think he's doin' more than his fee calls for.

DRUCILLA. [*Gathering up her sewing.*] Oh, I don't suppose he'll charge you for the buggy rides.

JOS. Look here, are you tryin' to tantalize me?

DRUCILLA. [*Rises with her sewing in her hands.*] Why, Joseph Ambrosia!

JOS. And don't call me Joseph Ambrosia again!

DRUCILLA. It's your name, ain't it?

JOS. Suppose it is, don't you think I get tired hearin' it all the time?

DRUCILLA. [*Going toward R. U. E.*] Well, if that's what love does to a person, thank goodness, I never was afflicted that way.

JOS. Get out of my sight!

DRUCILLA. [*At R. U. E.*] Well, Joseph Am—

JOS. Don't say it. [*Pushes her through R. U. E. and closes door. He stands there in thought for an instant, then comes down stage to couch and sits there dejectedly.*] Doctor Thorne! I might have known it. Joe Jones, you ain't nothin' but an old fool, and she's so sweet and pretty—just sweet and pretty. [*Sits in deep thought.*]

[CORINNE and DR. THORNE enter C. D., CORINNE holding on to the Doctor's arm, as he leads her gently down stage. JOE doesn't see them until CORINNE speaks.]

CORINNE. Mr. Joe, look, I'm walking.

JOS. [*Jumps up, speaks brightly.*] Well, bless my stars, if you ain't.

CORINNE. Stay there. I'm going to try it alone. Now be ready to catch me. Let me go, Doctor, I'm going to Mr. Joe.

[JOE holds out his arms to her, the DOCTOR lets her go and she starts walking toward JOE; as she gets close to him she falters and he catches her in his arms.]

JOS. [*Holding her close.*] My little girl—my little girl!

CORINNE. [*Puts her hand to his face.*] Why, Mr. Joe, you've been crying.

JOS. Cryin'—who—me?

CORINNE. Yes, I felt a tear on your face. Now, what made you cry?

JOS. Why—er—a mule kicked me.

CORINNE. Nonsense. Tell me the truth.

JOS. Well, honey, I guess I was cryin' for joy to see you walkin' again. There was a time when Dr. Thorne didn't hold out much hope.

DR. THORNE. [*Stands at table L.*] She helped herself a great deal by her own will and determination. If everyone were as hopeful as Corinne we doctors wouldn't flourish so well.

CORINNE. [*Sits on couch.*] Nonsense. I owe everything to you and Mr. Joe and Miss Drucilla. There never was such a lucky girl. I'm almost sorry I'm well again.

JOS. Sorry!

CORINNE. Yes; because now I'll have to leave you all.

JOS. Leave us! What for?

CORINNE. To work. The summer is only half over. I can get with another circus, I'm sure.

DR. THORNE. Oh, I knew there was something I wanted to tell you. The circus you were with, Darnem & Sellum's, is to be in this town on the 15th. I saw the posters yesterday and intended to tell you.

JOS. What do you know about that! None of us have been in town for a week so we didn't hear anything about it. So they've struck our town, have they?

CORINNE. The 15th. Why, isn't that tomorrow?

JOS. So it is! Well, well! I wonder if that Davis fellow is still with them.

CORINNE. I wouldn't be surprised.

DR. THORNE. Isn't he the man who caused the accident?

JOS. Yes, but it wasn't an accident. He did it on purpose. The boss discharged him.

CORINNE. But he most likely took him back again. It isn't easy to find a good ringmaster in the middle of the season.

JOS. But, Honey, I hope you ain't thinkin' of goin' back to that life.

CORINNE. That's the only thing I can do. I was born a circus performer.

DR. THORNE. And do you love it so well you want to go back?

CORINNE. Oh, no, Dr. Thorne, I don't love it. I know that is what they say about performers—that they cannot leave the life once they get into it—but it isn't true. Most of them are trying to save enough to buy a little home where they can settle down and be happy. I've been happy here—happier than I ever was in my life before.

JOS. Then why can't you stay?

CORINNE. And let you and Miss Drucilla support me? I couldn't do that, Mr. Joe.

JOS. Not even if we want you—powerful?

CORINNE. Not even then—as kind and good as you are. I must work and horses are the only thing I know. [*Enter DRUCILLA R. U. E.*]

JOS. Then I'll give you a job in my livery stable and you can sell mules.

DRUCILLA. Joseph Ambrosia, did I hear you offer that child a job in a livery stable?

JOS. I reckon you did, Druce.

DRUCILLA. Well, you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

JOS. I don't see why. It would help business considerable.

CORINNE. [*Laughing.*] I don't know anything about mules, Mr. Joe.

JOS. So much the better. While the customer is looking at you he wouldn't pay particular attention to the mule. You could say "See what nice gentle eyes he's got, and such a graceful tail and his disposition is so—so—er—"

DRUCILLA. Sweet and pretty.

JOS. Doggone you Druce, get out of here. [*CORINNE and DR. THORNE laugh.*]

DRUCILLA. I'm a-goin'. I'm glad enough to get away from your mule poetry, but I'm goin' to take this child back to her room for a nap before supper. Dr. Thorne,

you kept her out too long. Being a doctor you ought to know better.

DR. THORNE. I plead guilty, Miss Druce. I'm afraid I tired her out.

CORINNE. [*Laughing.*] Nonsense. The idea of making all this fuss over me. You'll spoil me dreadfully. I'm not used to it. [*She starts to rise, DR. THORNE and JOE start at the same time to assist her.*]

JOS. Now, Doc, you had her all morning. It's my turn now. [*Puts his arm around her to support her.*]

CORINNE. [*Holding on to JOSEPH and laughing happily.*] One would think I was a queen with a lot of loyal subjects.

JOS. So you are—just a little queen—with one loyal subject, anyway.

DR. THORNE. If your majesty will accept another subject, I beg to offer my allegiance. [*Bows to CORINNE.*]

CORINNE. [*Laughing.*] Ah, now, stop it. They're making fun of me, aren't they, Miss Druce?

DRUCILLA. [*Taking CORINNE from JOSEPH.*] Well, I always knew Joseph Ambrosia didn't have much sense, but I thought doctors were different. Come, honey, you're all tuckered out.

CORINNE. [*Going up toward R. U. E. with DRUCILLA.*] Thank you for the ride, Doctor. [*Turns to them at R. U. E.*] I bid my loyal subjects good afternoon.

JOS. AND DR. THORNE. [*Bowing to CORINNE.*] Good afternoon, your majesty.

[*CORINNE laughs happily and exits R. U. E. with DRUCILLA.*]

JOS. And to think of a child like that going out into the world to earn her own living.

DR. THORNE. I detest the thought of it.

JOS. I wish she'd stay right here, but you see how she is—proud as Lucifer.

DR. THORNE. She tells me she has no relatives living.

JOS. Not one.

DR. THORNE. I believe she looks upon you as her best friend—I might say her guardian.

JOS. I'd like to guard and protect her all her life if she'd only let me.

DR. THORNE. So would I. That's what I am trying to lead up to.

JOS. What do you mean?

DR. THORNE. That I love Corinne and want you to give her to me.

JOS. [*Sits on couch.*] My soul!

DR. THORNE. Does it surprise you?

JOS. No—I don't see how anybody can help lovin' her—but it's come so sudden.

DR. THORNE. You have no objection to me?

JOS. Of course not. Does she care for you?

DR. THORNE. I don't know. I have been acting in the capacity of her physician the past five weeks, but now that she is well there was no excuse for continuing my visits unless I made my position clear. As you are the only guardian she has I wanted your permission before speaking to her.

JOS. [*Rising, and trying not to let his voice betray him.*] You have it.

DR. THORNE. [*Holding out his hand.*] And you will wish me luck?

JOS. [*Gives his hand.*] Yes. I know you'll take good care of her.

DR. THORNE. Thank you. [*Going up to C. D.*] I'll be in again tomorrow. [*Exits C. D.*]

JOS. [*Sits on couch in dejected attitude, his hands clasped, arms resting on knees.*] So, it's settled. She's not for you, you old hayseed. It's only natural she should take to him; he's young, good-lookin' and a gentleman. It just had to be—it had to be. [*Sits in deep thought.*]

DRUCILLA. [*Enters R. U. E., looks at JOSEPH in surprise.*] Well, Joseph Am—

JOS. [*Jumping up, turns up stage toward C. D.*] Don't say it now, Druce; don't say it now! [*Exits, slamming door after him.*]

DRUCILLA. [*Looks after him in surprise.*] Well, who

—well, what—what's got into that brother of mine! He's acting as cantankerous as one of his own mules. Men are peculiar critters, to say the least; and the older they get the worse they get. I ain't goin' to bother my head about him; he'll come to his senses in good time, I reckon. [*Crosses to table L. C.* DAVIS *raps on center door from outside.*] Now, who's that, I wonder. Come in! [DAVIS *enters C. D.*] Well, sir, what is it? If you want to buy a mule the livery stable is around the corner.

DAVIS. What makes you think I want to buy a mule?

DRUCILLA. Well, you're a stranger to me. This ain't a social call, is it?

DAVIS. Why not—we've met before, but you seem to have forgotten me. Don't you remember the circus?

DRUCILLA. [*With a gasp of astonishment.*] I know you now. You're the villain that tried to kill our little girl. You've got nerve to come here!

DAVIS. That was an accident.

DRUCILLA. Accident nothin'! It's a lucky thing for you my brother ain't here.

DAVIS. Why?

DRUCILLA. There might be another accident. You had better go while it's healthy.

DAVIS. I came to see Corinne. I understand she is still living with you?

DRUCILLA. Where else would she be? She couldn't take a step without help until today. Do you think she wants to see *you*?

DAVIS. I think she does. After five weeks of this sort of thing she'll be mighty glad to get back to circus life.

DRUCILLA. What do you mean by "this sort of thing"? She's had a good home, good care and good friends since she's been here, and that's more than she ever had before.

DAVIS. Now, my good woman—

DRUCILLA. Don't you "good woman" me, you good-for-nothin' scalawag!

CORINNE. [*Enters R. U. E.*] Miss Drucilla, what's the matter?

DRUCILLA. Here's a friend of yours come to visit you.

DAVIS. [*Advances and holds out his hand to CORINNE.*] Hello, Corinne.

CORINNE. [*Looks at him coldly.*] He's no friend of mine, Miss Drucilla. If he has come to visit me, he can go at once.

DRUCILLA. The door is right in back of you, Mister.

DAVIS. Well, really, I didn't expect such an enthusiastic welcome. But I can't go until I have had a word with you, Corinne. If my ardent admirer here [*Bowing to DRUCILLA.*] will leave us—

DRUCILLA. I'll do nothing of the kind.

DAVIS. I hate to have you go, but it is a business matter that concerns Corinne alone.

CORINNE. I'm not afraid of him, Miss Druce. The sooner you go the sooner I'll get rid of him.

DRUCILLA. Well, Joseph is right around in the livery stable, so he had better not linger. [*Goes up to R. U. E.*]

DAVIS. [*Bowing mockingly to DRUCILLA.*] Good-day, sweet lady.

DRUCILLA. You go to Jerusalem! [*Exits R. U. E.*]

DAVIS. She loves me, does she not?

CORINNE. You had better go, Mr. Davis. I don't understand why you came.

DAVIS. Oh, yes, you do, Corinne. I wanted to see you.

CORINNE. I don't care to listen to you. If you had any real reason for coming, state it and go.

DAVIS. I'll go when you go with me, not before.

CORINNE. I'll never go with you.

DAVIS. Don't be childish. Harvey wants you back. You were the best performer he had, and he can't get along without you.

CORINNE. If Mr. Harvey has anything to offer me he will have to do it himself. I can't understand why he sent *you*.

DAVIS. As a matter of fact, he didn't send me. He

fired me the day you were hurt, but he has had difficulty finding a man to replace me, so I am rejoining the show when it arrives here tomorrow. I do know he wants you, too, so I thought I'd get here a day earlier and hunt you up.

CORINNE. Then you may go. Mr. Harvey can see me himself tomorrow.

DAVIS. What's the idea of all this high and mighty business? Who do you think you are—a queen?

CORINNE. I've been treated like one here.

DAVIS. These blamed hayseeds have spoiled you, that's what! Now, you listen to me, Corinne. I'm tired of eating humble pie. You are going to belong to me, and the sooner you understand it the better. You can't hold out forever, and I'll never give up until I get you. [JOSEPH enters C. D. unnoticed. He listens.] I admit I did make Spitfire throw you that day because I wanted you to be left behind, so that I could take care of you. I didn't know that long-eared yap was going to interfere and spoil my plans. Now, I've got you again and you can't escape. [DAVIS takes a step toward CORINNE.]

Jos. [With rage, grabs him by the throat and throws him up stage against C. D.] You contemptible scum of the earth, I'll kill you if you touch her. [Jos. releases DAVIS, who staggers an instant and then leans against C. D., his hand to his throat. Jos. is down R. between DAVIS and CORINNE. On his last word he puts his hand to hip pocket as if to draw a revolver.]

CORINNE. [Catches Jos.' arm.] Don't, Mr. Joe. He ain't worth it!

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE—*Same as Act II. The following day. Enter Jos. C. D., chuckling to himself. Throws his hat on table L. C.*

JOS. By Heck, it do beat all! The slickest piece of work I ever saw. [*Chuckles to himself.*]

DRUCILLA. [*Enters R. U. E.*] Have you gone clean daft, talkin' to yourself like that?

JOS. What do you think she's gone and done? Sold that wall-eyed mule to Jakes Gessler.

DRUCILLA. Who has?

JOS. Corinne. The slickest job I ever did see. Jake Gessler, of all men!

DRUCILLA. Have you set that child to sellin' mules?

JOS. She wanted to do it. She has given up the idea of going back to the circus since she learned that scamp Davis is to be with it, and she's got a foolish idea in her head about earning her own living.

DRUCILLA. As if she wasn't welcome to stay here.

JOS. She won't stay unless she finds something to do, and that was the only job I had to offer.

DRUCILLA. Well, I am surprised!

JOS. Ain't she gone and sold a mule already—the worst specimen I had in the place—to Jake Gessler, the closest buyer in this neighborhood.

DRUCILLA. Sold a mule to Jake Gessler!

JOS. Yep—clean as a whistle—without an ounce of help from me. I just kept my mouth shut, held my breath, and prayed to the Lord.

DRUCILLA. It's a good thing you had sense enough to do that. But how in the world could that child sell a mule?

JOS. Jake was so flustered when she looked at him he didn't know whether he was buying a mule or a goat,

and when she told him to "see what gentle, soft brown eyes" that old critter had, I almost busted. [*Laughs.*]

DRUCILLA. And did you leave her there to finish the sale alone?

JOS. *She* didn't need any assistance from *me*. *She's* goin' to make the best little salesman you ever saw.

DRUCILLA. Well, I'm goin' right there and fetch her home. [*Turns toward C. D. CORINNE enters C. D.*]

JOS. You needn't. Here she is.

CORINNE. [*Laughing.*] Well, I made the sale.

JOS. Sure. I knew you'd land him—that's why I skipped out.

DRUCILLA. You never did sell that old bag of bones to Jake Gessler?

CORINNE. Yes, I did, and got the money.

JOS. How much?

CORINNE. Two hundred and twenty-five dollars.

[*JOSEPH drops on couch. DRUCILLA into chair L. C. CORINNE laughs.*]

JOS. My land! That old skate!

DRUCILLA. Two hundred and twenty-five dollars! Well, I never!

CORINNE. And here's the money. [*Counts money into JOS.' hand.*] There are two hundred dollar bills, two tens and one five.

JOS. No—hold on there. That twenty-five is your commission for making the sale.

CORINNE. [*Giving JOS. the money and drawing back.*] Oh, no, Mr. Joe, I couldn't think of it.

DRUCILLA. Why not? He'd never have sold that old relic himself, and you got two hundred and twenty-five dollars for it. Twenty-five is little enough.

JOS. It's only ten per cent and still leaves me a good profit. [*Puts notes into CORINNE'S hand.*] There you are, little girl; your first day's pay.

CORINNE. [*Looking at money in surprise.*] Goodness me! I thought six or seven dollars a week would be wonderful—just enough to pay my board to Miss Drucilla.

DRUCILLA. What's that! Pay board to me! What are you talkin' about, child! I should say not!

JOS. And, besides, a pretty girl like you needs pretty things. Now, run along and buy yourself twenty-five dollars worth of ribbons.

[TED knocks at center door from outside.]

DRUCILLA. Now, who can that be? [*Goes quickly up stage and opens door. Enter TED, the jockey. He sees CORINNE, runs to her and shakes hands.*]

TED. Hello, Corinne. Gee, I'm glad to see you.

CORINNE. Why, it's Ted. Oh, I'm so glad. How did you know where to find me?

TED. Oh, Davis told the boss. You know we want you again, Corinne. Mr. Harvey is coming after you.

CORINNE. [*To JOE and DRUCILLA.*] You remember Ted, don't you?

DRUCILLA. Sure. He was the little fellow in the tight breeches.

JOS. There you go again, Druce. Seems to me you paid more attention to clothes that day than you did to the circus.

TED. Howdy! Yep, I'm the jockey.

JOS. So they want the little girl back, do they?

TED. Yes, sir. Boss said we can't get along without her.

JOS. That ain't what he said the day she was hurt.

TED. You mustn't blame Mr. Harvey, sir. He does the best he can.

CORINNE. That's circus life, Mr. Joe.

JOS. Well, I don't want you to go back to it.

CORINNE. I'll never join any show that Mr. Davis belongs to.

TED. [*Looking around the room.*] Gee, this looks comfortable. It makes a fellow feel good to get inside of a real home once in a while. I bet you got nice soft beds upstairs, ain't you?

CORINNE. The softest beds you ever saw, Ted.

TED. Gee! And clean sheets and feather pillows?

CORINNE. White as snow and sweet as lavender.

TED. Gee, that's great! And you've been here five weeks. Think of sleeping in a real bed for five weeks, livin' in the same house, and eatin' off a real table. And I bet they was some eats, eh?

CORINNE. Well, I should say. Ted, you just ought to taste Miss Drucilla's hot biscuits.

TED. And preserves, too? I bet you didn't have no preserves.

CORINNE. Home-made preserves that would melt in your mouth, and spread as thick as that [*Indicates with fingers.*] on hot biscuits.

TED. Don't tell me no more—I can't stand it!

DRUCILLA. He has just got to taste some of them biscuits. [*Exits R. U. E.*]

JOS. Wouldn't you like to have a regular home, Ted, with regular meals and a real bed to sleep in?

TED. You bet I would. I never had a home—I never!

JOS. Then what's the matter with stayin' right here with us?

CORINNE. Oh, Ted, listen!

TED. Do you mean it?

JOS. I sure do. I'd like to have you. I ain't got no fast horses for you to ride, but if you like mules—

TED. I like all animals—dogs and cats and horses and elephants and tigers—and even rhinoceroses.

JOS. That's some animal—that last one.

TED. You bet you. And they all likes me, don't they, Corinne?

CORINNE. That's right. They all like Ted.

TED. And they'd miss me somethin' awful if I left them. You see, some of the fellows ain't nice to 'em, 'specially when the boss ain't around.

JOS. I thought you just rode the horses?

TED. Oh, no, I helps to feed and water the animals, too. You got to do a lot of things around a circus. You ought to see our elephant toss me up in the air and set me down again, just like a baby. I tell you, that old skate just loves me.

JOS. I reckon that means that you won't come live with us.

TED. Gee, I'd like to, Mister. It would be great to have a home like this, but, you see, they're my friends, and I can't go back on 'em.

JOS. [*Pats TED's shoulder.*] All right, Ted, but I want you to remember that the home is here whenever you feel like coming.

TED. T'anks, Mister, t'anks. [*Wipes his eyes with his coatsleeve.*] Gee, but youse is a great fellow.

CORINNE. [*Her hand on JOS.'s shoulder.*] He's the best man in the whole world, Ted. I guess I ought to know.

JOS. [*Embarrassed.*] Here, you two youngsters are plum spoiling me.

DR. THORNE. [*Enters C.*] Good morning people. I've come to take the little girl for a drive. Are you ready, Corinne?

CORINNE. Yes, Doctor. This is Ted. You have heard me speak of Ted?

DR. THORNE. Indeed I have. How are you, young man? [*Shakes hands with TED.*] Maybe Ted will come along with us?

TED. T'anks, sir, but I've got to hike back to the lot. You know we give a parade today.

DR. THORNE. So you do. Well, come along, and I'll drop you wherever you say. [*CORINNE has put on her hat.*]

CORINNE. We won't be long, Mr. Joe. I want to be back in time to see the parade with you from the window.

[*CORINNE, TED and DR. THORNE turn toward C. D. Enter DRUCILLA R. U., with pasteboard shoe-box.*]

DRUCILLA. Wait a minute, Ted. Here's a dozen of them biscuits and a jar of home-made jell. I reckon you're goin' to eat 'em all, and holler for more.

TED. [*Takes box under his arm.*] Oh, t'anks, ma'am. Say, you won't mind if I give one of 'em to Christopher Columbus, will youse?

DRUCILLA. Who is Christopher Columbus?

TED. He's my dog. He's an ugly son-of-a-gun, but he's my pal.

DR. THORNE. Why do you call him Christopher Columbus?

TED. [*Proudly.*] 'Cause he kin lick anything his size. He's some scrapper.

DR. THORNE. Then you should have called him George Washington or Ulysses Grant.

TED. [*Puzzled.*] Is dat so? Guess I kinda got my dates mixed. Well, I can't change it now. I guess Useless Grant and dem other guys won't mind.

DR. THORNE. [*Laughing.*] No, they'll understand you didn't mean to slight them.

TED. [*With box under one arm, he waves his cap to the others in the room.*] Well, so long, folks. Youse has treated me grand. [*To DRUCILLA.*] T'anks for the eats, lady, and Christopher Columbus t'anks you, too. [*Exit C. D., followed by CORINNE and DR. THORNE, who are laughing.*]

JOS. [*Laughing.*] My gracious, but he's a comical youngster! How would you like to have him about the house, Druce?

DRUCILLA. Well, I never cared much for children, but since Corinne has been here I'm kinda changin' my mind.

JOS. [*Impatiently.*] How many times have I got to tell you that Corinne ain't a child. She's a young woman, and, what's more, she's—

DRUCILLA. [*Interrupting.*] Now, don't say "sweet and pretty."

JOS. Well, I'm thinkin' it. What I was goin' to say is—she's goin' to be married.

DRUCILLA. [*In surprise.*] My land—who—what—when—

JOS. I don't know "what" nor "when," but the "who" is Dr. Thorne.

DRUCILLA. [*With a long breath.*] Well—I—never!

JOS. Neither did I! I reckon when she comes back she'll be engaged.

DRUCILLA. Well, Joseph Ambrosia!

JOS. [*Exasperated.*] Doggone it, I knew you were goin' to say that. Don't you suppose I feel bad enough about it, without you "Joseph-Ambrosia-ing" me?

DRUCILLA. I don't see what there is to feel bad about.

JOS. No, *you* don't. *I* do!

DRUCILLA. I think it's a very good match.

JOS. Well, who said it wasn't?

DRUCILLA. You ought to be glad the child is doing so well.

JOS. [*Gloomily.*] I ought to be—but I ain't!

DRUCILLA. Why ain't you?

JOS. Gosh hang it, Druce, if you don't shut up and git out of here, somethin' is goin' to bust!

[*There is a rap at center door.*]

DRUCILLA. Now, I wonder who *that* can be?

JOS. I know how to find out.

DRUCILLA. [*Going to C. D.*] So do I, smarty.
[*Opens door. Enter HARVEY, followed by DAVIS. They remain up stage. DRUCILLA stands back of door, looking at DAVIS.*] Well, the nerve of some people!

HARVEY. [*To JOS.*] Good morning. I'm Harvey of the circus.

JOS. Yes, I recognize you. Come in and sit down—but you'll have to leave your dog outside.

[*DAVIS glares angrily at JOS. DRUCILLA smothers a laugh. HARVEY looks puzzled.*]

HARVEY. My dog?

JOS. That animal that's trailin' behind you.

DAVIS. [*Angrily to JOS.*] Do you mean me?

JOS. I hate to flatter you, but I do.

DAVIS. [*Raises his cane.*] You—

HARVEY. [*Puts out his arm to stop DAVIS.*] None of that, Davis. I came here on a matter of business.

JOS. I'll have nothing to say to you until that rascal leaves my house.

HARVEY. [*To DAVIS.*] Go back to the lot, Davis. I don't need you.

DAVIS. You ought to have Corinne for the parade.

Her costume is ready—all she's got to do is jump into it.

HARVEY. Get out, I tell you.

DAVIS. [*In doorway, faces Jos.*] I'll get even with you, you—

DRUCILLA. [*Slams door on him, shutting him out.*] Oh, you git out! [*Exits R. U. E.*]

HARVEY. [*To Jos.*] I apologize for bringing Davis. I didn't know that you disapproved of him.

JOS. Oh, I don't disapprove of him. I'd only like to wring his neck, that's all.

HARVEY. You know why I am here, I suppose? I want Corinne to come back to us.

JOS. I'm afraid you're too late.

HARVEY. What do you mean? She hasn't accepted another engagement?

JOS. I wouldn't be surprised.

HARVEY. Why, that's not likely. There's no other circus playing this territory.

JOS. I guess there are other engagements besides circus engagements.

HARVEY. [*Surprised.*] You don't mean—?

JOS. Yes, I do, too.

HARVEY. Engaged to be married! Little Corinne! [*With a sigh of resignation.*] Well, I guess that settles it.

JOS. It usually does.

HARVEY. Give her my best wishes. I hope she'll be happy.

JOS. Won't you wait?

HARVEY. No, I must get back to business. The parade starts at eleven. So long. [*Exit.*]

JOS. By gosh, I've almost got Corinne married without her knowing anything about it.

DRUCILLA. [*Enters R. U. E.*] Has that man gone?

JOS. No, I've got him in my pocket.

DRUCILLA. You think you're smart, don't you?

JOS. If I were I wouldn't answer your fool questions.

DRUCILLA. You were talkin' to yourself when I came in.

JOS. Well, if I were I don't want any answer.

DRUCILLA. I'll be glad when Corinne is married and out of the house, for you've been acting like a cantankerous old mule ever since she has been engaged.

JOS. See here, Druce, don't you go saying anything to Corinne until she tells you herself.

DRUCILLA. Why not? She *is* engaged, ain't she?

JOS. I don't know.

DRUCILLA. You don't know?

JOS. The fact is, I ain't sure. I know the doctor is going to ask her, but of course she has got something to say about it.

DRUCILLA. Well, I should hope so! Maybe she'll refuse him.

JOS. Druce, that's the nicest thing you've said for weeks.

DRUCILLA. Oh, is that so? I suppose if she does, you'll ask her yourself.

JOS. I ain't got the nerve.

[*There is a loud murmur of excited voices off stage.*]

DRUCILLA. What's that, Joe? Do you hear? Something has happened.

JOS. Maybe it's the circus starting.

DRUCILLA. [*Throws open center door.*] No—it's our livery stable—there's a crowd—it must be a fire!

JOS. Fire! At the stable! Out of the way, Druce, I must save my horses. [*Jos. starts toward center door. DRUCILLA waves him back.*]

DRUCILLA. My land, Corinne has been hurt—the doctor is carrying her here.

[*Enter DR. THORNE, with CORINNE in his arms.*]

JOS. Corinne, my little girl, what is it?

DR. THORNE. [*Placing CORINNE on the couch.*] It's all right, folks. She isn't hurt. I had to carry her away to keep her from going back into that burning stable.

CORINNE. Well, I had to save the horses.

DR. THORNE. She saw the fire first, and was in there before anyone could stop her. The horses are all out, and the fire won't amount to much.

JOS. Hang the fire! If anything had happened to you, Corinne.

CORINNE. [*On couch, JOS. kneeling on floor beside her.*] Why, Mr. Joe, I love those animals. My, weren't they glad to see me! It's funny how a fire could start there, isn't it?

JOS. I can't figure it out.

DRUCILLA. Somebody threw a lighted cigarette in there, and if I ain't very much mistaken, I know who did it.

JOS. Who do you mean?

DRUCILLA. That Davis! He said he'd get even, didn't he?

JOS. [*Standing up.*] If I thought—

DR. THORNE. He would only deny it, and you have no proof. No great harm has been done. Better let it rest.

DRUCILLA. [*To CORINNE.*] Come, honey, and have a cup of tea. You're still trembling. [*With her arm around CORINNE, they exit R. U. E.*]

JOS. Well, Doc, [*With a nod toward R. U. E.*], am I to offer congratulations?

DR. THORNE. I'm sorry to say no, Joe.

JOS. What! She hasn't refused you?

DR. THORNE. That's just what she has done.

JOS. Great Scott, I wonder why?

DR. THORNE. You had better ask her and find out.

JOS. Didn't she tell you?

DR. THORNE. Yes—she said there was someone else she cared for.

JOS. She didn't tell you who?

DR. THORNE. No, I didn't ask her. I thought I'd leave that to the other fellow. So long, Joe. [*Exit C. D.*]

JOS. Well—what—do—you — know — about—that?
[*Enter CORINNE R. U. E. JOS. is L. C.*]

CORINNE. [*Stands shyly near R. U. E.*] Mr. Joe,—
Dr. Thorne asked me to marry him this morning.

JOS. [*Softly.*] I know he did, Girlie.

CORINNE. And I refused.

JOS. He—he told me.

CORINNE. Are you sorry?

JOS. No, I'm glad—glad!

CORINNE. Why?

JOS. [*Holding out his arms to her.*] Oh, honey,
don't you know—I want you myself?

CORINNE. Mr. Joe! [*CORINNE runs to JOS., who
folds her in his arms.*]

JOS. My own little girl—at last!

DRUCILLA. [*Enters R. U. E., stands amazed.*] Well,
Joseph Ambrosia! [*The circus band starts to play in
the distance. DRUCILLA runs to the door.*] Here comes
the parade.

JOS. [*To CORINNE.*] There's the band, honey. Does
it make you homesick?

CORINNE. No, my home is here, always and forever.
[*Puts her arms around JOS.'s neck. He kisses her.*
DRUCILLA is at the door beating time to the band.]

CURTAIN.

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MRS. HALSTEAD, a widow, and stepmother of the Halstead girls
HANNAH MARY BARNES, or "Sis," a maiden lady who keeps house for her brother.....
DWIGHT BRADLEY, a fortune hunter and Mrs. Halstead's son by a former marriage.....
DR. BURTON, a young physician.....
SAMMY, the darkey bell-boy in the Halstead house.....
ABRAHAM BARNES, or "Bub," a yankee farmer, still unmarried at forty—a diamond in the rough.....
ATTORNEY; SHERIFF

Time of playing, two hours.

Two interior scenes. Modern costumes.

SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS

Act. 1. Parlor of the Halstead home. The young doctor. The three girls plot to make his acquaintance. An affection of the heart. "Easy to fool a young doctor," but not so easy after all. The step-mother and her son. The stolen diamonds. The missing will. Plot to win Bernice. "I would not marry Dwight Bradley for all the wealth the world contains." Driven from home.

Act 2. Kitchen of the Barnes' farm house. Bub takes off his boots. The new school ma'am. "Supper's ready." "This is our nephew and he's a doctor." Recognition. A difficult problem in arithmetic. The doctor to the rescue. "I'm just the happiest girl in the world." "I've come to pop the question, an' why don't I do it?" Brother and sister. "If it's a heifer, it's teh be mine." The sheriff. Arrested for stealing the diamonds. "Let me knock yer durned head off." The jewels found in Bernice's trunk.

Act 3. Parlor of the Halstead home. "That was a lucky stroke—hiding those diamonds in her trunk." The schemer's plot miscarries. Abe and Sammy join hands. The lawyer. "Bully for her." Bradley tries to escape. "No, ye don't!" Arrested. "It means, dear, that you are to be persecuted no more." Wedding presents, and a war dance around them. "It is no trick at all to fool a young doctor."

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Howard Ross.....	A manufacturer
Dennis Hogan.....	Servant to Ross
Abel	Gardener to Ross
Judge Havens.....	Of the police court
Recorder	Of the police court
Lettner	Clerk of police court
Second Court Clerk.....	Clerk of police court
Two policemen	
Little Hugo.....	Agatha's child
Agatha Steme	Ross' bookkeeper
Ida Rheinhold.....	A retired singer
Mrs. Wilmuth.....	A washerwoman
Katie	Factory girl
Frances	Factory girl

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Act 1. Ross' private office. "What has given me the honor of this visit?" "I will never sing again. My life has been a sad failure." "Good God! My mother!" "I have done wrong, I confess, but when a mother asks, a child must forgive. Oh, Mr. Ross, help me." "You, my rich and famous mother, to you I was nothing, and you—you are nothing—nothing to me." "Agatha! Agatha! My child! My child!"

Act 2. Agatha's attic. "My poor father. So young and strong. How I could have loved him." "Yes, Katie is right, I have nothing but bread for my sweet child." "Madam, I would lie if I say she was anything but a lady." "On the other side, towards the garden, there are a few rooms I have never used. If you will take them—" "You do not look like a man who could commit murder. How was it?" "I was a weak man and many misfortunes made me desperate." "My picture! I must be mad." "You are good, child, but you shall not call me father." "Father! Father!"

Act 3. Ross' Garden. "He is so good to me, but I cannot forget my poor unhappy father." "The picture was taken when I was young. He shall have it." "Stay here and be my wife." "That suspicious old man is in the garden." "For her I sacrificed everything." "Do you want to go to prison again?" "My father needs me to defend and comfort him."

Act 4. A Police Court. "Do not ask me, your honor—I am an ex-convict." "Your silence will not help you." "It was dark und Mrs. Steme was that scared she was faint." "I hope, sor, yer honor believes in a future life, sor." "He wished to see his child; I am his child." "Grandfather, we love you." "I am his wife. Do not condemn him."

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BLANCHE DILLINGHAM.....Wife of Walter, *Lead*
DORA RUGGLES.....In love with Slocum, *Ingenue*
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